

# **Visioning Riverside:**

## **A Report from the Community**

October 2002



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## **THE VISION**

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# Riverside Community Visioning

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A unique challenge for any community is creating a vision for future planning. The Riverside Community Visioning process began with an inspiration and evolved into an image of what Riversiders want to create for our children, our grandchildren, and ourselves. Because a vision reflects the soul of a community, it must be grounded in the shared values of the residents, business community and spiritual leaders. Since the Vision will help chart our future course, it must also reflect our shared aspirations.

The City has already conducted extensive technical research into economic development, housing, job creation, transportation, and environmental issues. This community visioning process complements those efforts by giving voice to the concerns and hopes of Riverside residents. It is a chance for participants to directly and meaningfully influence City decision-making.

Our Vision has been built with the consensus of people who represent the entire community – residents, businesses, and

property owners, community leaders and organizers, interest groups, local officials, and environmental and civic groups. During the past seven months, hundreds of Riversiders offered their ideas, solutions, and creativity to address some difficult and often emotional issues, including how to ensure a high quality of life:

- ❑ With safe neighborhoods as centers of community life;
- ❑ A strong K-12 education system that benefits from a mutual partnership with the City's three exceptional universities and one college;



- ❑ A vibrant city with thriving arts, culture, and entertainment venues that embrace and nurture the diversity of the community;
- ❑ An attractive network of safe parks and accessible open space;
- ❑ The retention of our rich architectural and citrus heritage;
- ❑ Manageable traffic with a variety of ways to get around the City and the Region;

- ❑ And a healthy economy, with a dynamic downtown, prosperous entrepreneurial business community, and ample high quality employment opportunities.

In order to capture and document the ideals, dreams, and hard facts of the community, the project utilized a number of tools. These tools included:

- ❑ A Vision Planning Committee made up of a diverse group of community leaders appointed by the City Council; (see Appendix B)
- ❑ Production and distribution (60,000 copies) of *Riverside At-a-Glance*; (see Appendix A)
- ❑ A youth visioning program; (see Appendix E)
- ❑ A media outreach and education effort;
- ❑ Interviews with 41 key stakeholders, as identified by City staff, which included representatives from the neighborhoods, recreation advocates, educators (both K-12 and higher education), historic preservationists, the media, the Chambers of Commerce, City Council, religious leaders, and community activists, plus arts and open space advocates; (see Appendix D)
- ❑ Presentations at various community events including the Mayor's State of the City Address, Good Morning Riverside,

the Youth Action Coordinating Council; and Riverside Wednesday Night.

- ❑ A program of trained volunteers dubbed Visioneers. More than 130 residents and business leaders joined the effort and spoke with more than 1,300 people generating more than 5,000 comments. The Visioneer program was conducted in English and Spanish; (see Appendix B and C)
- ❑ Finally, a Community Visioning and Resource Festival with more than 450 participants who shared their thoughts in three facilitated town hall discussions and visited booths from more than 50 different resource agencies. (See Appendix G)

As Riverside prepares for the future, the City is encountering both opportunities and challenges. In this fast-paced, rapidly changing world, we need to be smart, realistic, compassionate and inclusive in our planning. Our *Visioning Riverside: A Report from the Community* will help the City and its policy makers, shape priorities and guide planning decisions and actions well into the future.

# VISION – THEMES

## HOW WE WORK

Economic and Workforce Development

Riversiders pursue the American Dream. We focus on creating economic development opportunities that provide high skilled, high paid employment for all members of our community.

## HOW WE PLAY

Arts/Culture/Entertainment  
Parks/Recreation/Libraries  
Physical Amenities

Riverside is an oasis. This City combines trees, water, and the arts to create a distinctive comfortable gathering place that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike.

## HOW WE LIVE

Housing

We empower neighborhoods. We listen to each other and pay attention to the details because it matters. Neighborhoods enable the City, and residents to work together to solve the needs of all.

## HOW WE GET AROUND

Transportation and Land Use

Riverside has responded to the traffic challenge by becoming a more self-contained city. Residents have easy access to an efficient, multi-option transportation system that enables them to meet their needs within the community.

## HOW WE LEARN

K-12 Education: Parental, Community, and Business Involvement

Excellence in education is the key to economic growth. Riversiders work together to achieve quality education at all levels.



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# The Vision

## A Brief Overview of Riverside's Future

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Riverside has fulfilled its promise as the city of potential – the place where the American Dream is realized. Home ownership and well-paying jobs are the norm. Employers have relocated from other cities into infill development areas created to accommodate compatible industries while maintaining the visual and community-centered character of the City.

People come to Riverside for the schools; from preschool through university-level. The schools are a focal point for involvement by parents, members of the business community and Riverside's extensive volunteer network. The educational system – from preschool through advanced degrees – ensures that young people are prepared for the high-paying skilled and professional jobs that have proliferated in the City. The nature of these jobs reflects the diversity and entrepreneurial spirit of the City, with a special focus on micro-enterprise and local business.

The City is a destination in itself – people come from all over Southern California to enjoy the physical beauty and historic architecture. The City has a sense of coolness and freshness that makes

it an oasis. Forested parks and streets, arts and culture, fountains and pools, and a lively, interesting downtown are the focal point for activity, providing refreshing places to relax and play.

Quality, uniqueness, and diversity distinguish Riverside from other cities that have experienced similar growth. Industry is compatible with the community. Design guidelines and code enforcement maintain the visual quality of the City. The City has preserved and built on the rich history of the area's citrus and educational heritage.

Regardless of income level, people are able to find distinctive, special places to live. Each neighborhood is a safe, family-oriented place. Distinct neighborhoods, each with its own history, are able to function independently, with nearby parks, playing fields, shopping and services. While each neighborhood has a unique feel and voice, they support each other and people travel freely among the neighborhoods to access unique shopping, dining and cultural activities.

Because people are able to live and work in Riverside – often within their own neighborhoods – traffic congestion has been reduced.

Since people find that they can forego the two to four hours of daily commute time that they used to spend traveling to jobs outside of Riverside, they have been able to recapture time for their families and

community. In these and so many other ways, the City has preserved the best of its past, while also pursuing new dreams for an even better future.



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## THE VISION

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# Chapter 1

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## **A Vision for Riverside: A Report from the Community**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the next ten to twenty years, Riverside and the Inland Empire are expecting growth to be explosive. This approaching wave of change represents both an opportunity and a threat. If properly managed and focused growth will allow Riverside to once again become known as the place that “has attracted and is developing a high type of citizenry (and) has become known as the place of culture and contentment.”<sup>1</sup> If not carefully planned for, however, growth could jeopardize the very qualities that have long made Riverside a special place in which to live and work.

There are many questions to consider when planning how best to respond to and work with these coming changes. How can Riverside position itself so it can keep and attract people with high skills, knowledge, and creative energy while it uplifts less skilled members of the community who also deserve a chance to make a positive contribution to the City’s future? How should the people revitalize and

enhance the built environment while preserving the City’s rich heritage? Most importantly, how can Riverside achieve these lofty ambitions while dealing with limited resources and the need to address today’s priorities?

This chapter will outline the key themes identified through the Visioning process. It will provide recommendations that should provide guidance during policy debates. Some of the recommendations are rooted in today’s hard facts. These recommendations will seem obvious to many. Some recommendations may seem implausible. That may be. Nevertheless, as Daniel Burnham stated in the influential 1909 Plan of Chicago, “Make not little plans; they have not magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Coil; President, City Planning Commission – June 1929 – Recreation, Civic Center and Regional Plan, City of Riverside

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Burnham, Plan of Chicago, 1909

The Visioning project team was inspired by a well-known quote from the Bible. The quote can be found inscribed at Riverside's City Hall as well as the clock tower at the Mission Inn. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." This plan is the beginning of the debate on how Riverside will not only survive but also flourish.

Throughout the Visioning process, we heard that Riverside is a unique place that has a special quality unlike any other place around. Long time residents still talk about the scent of the orange blossoms when the wind was just right. Other remarked about the wonderful downtown, its distinctive architecture and growing cultural and retail activities. Most people dreamed of a place that has quality, surprise, and variety. Riverside is seen as a good place to raise a family, to live, work and play.

*Visioning Riverside: A Report from the Community* is a tool for this generation of leaders to begin a dialogue with future Riversiders on how best to preserve and enhance this magical place before it is too late. A vision for the future is a well-intentioned exercise, but what about the needs of today's residents and businesses. According to the Husing



economic development report, with today's limited resources, the City faces a dilemma. If the City tries to focus on the needs of its poorest citizens and neighborhoods, it may not have sufficient resources for necessary long term economic and community development. If Riverside focuses on the organization and infrastructure to maximize the inward migration of skilled labor from the coastal cities, it will not have enough resources to take care of basic needs today. However, without this advance planning the current prosperity will not be sustainable. So, where and how to focus its resources to create the best future for all its residents? What are the leverage points that will enable the City to escape this seeming contradiction?

The answer may lie in what has driven past growth and prosperity and examining which of these factors still seem true today. During the

Visioning process, we heard repeatedly that Riverside has a way of surprising people. They came to Riverside for one reason but decided to stay for others. We believe that this secret is still very much alive today. Some examples that the project team heard include:

- The young couple from back east that came to the Mission Inn for their honeymoon, fell in love with Riverside and 20

years later are still here.

- ❑ The young man who comes here after his father retires, leaves to go away to college with the intent never to return, but is drawn back again and again, until he decides there is simply no other place he would rather be.
- ❑ The University of California, Riverside graduate student who discovers that this is not only a great place to complete her education but is where she wants to live and raise a family.
- ❑ Young and old alike who come seeking a more affordable place to live but who discover that Riverside is where they would have chosen anyway had they only known what the City had to offer them.
- ❑ The young woman from Seattle who follows her fiancé to the Inland Empire but becomes terribly home sick until one day when she discovers Riverside and finds what she has been missing.

As one person so memorably put it, “People come here for the oranges, but stay for the love.” Whether that metaphorical orange is an affordable place to live, a high quality, high -paying job, or a quality education, people keep falling in love with Riverside, finding that they never want to leave.

In the coming decades, many people will be coming to the Inland Empire to live and work. Many of them will choose to come to Riverside. Depending upon who they are and what they aspire to they

will inevitably shape the future of the City. Riverside can choose to take advantage of its natural assets, the same ones that have benefited it in the past. These assets are the secret qualities that have given Riverside its unique sense of place. It must build upon these qualities to distinguish itself as the destination of choice for those who have both the desire and the means to make Riverside once again an economic and cultural powerhouse.



If Riverside wants to project the image that it is the business, governmental, cultural, and educational center of the Inland Empire, then it must take deliberate steps today to shape the future of tomorrow. Alternatively, as Alan Kay once remarked, “The best way to predict the future is to invent it.” The outcome will be based on the



ideals, dreams, and hard facts that will model how we live, work, and play. Riverside needs to remind itself that it has been at the center of the region for most of its history. It is our hope that this report inspires debate that will generate the solutions that enable Riverside to reach its ideal vision for the future.

The rest of this chapter outlines the Vision for Riverside that emerged from the input provided by all those who participated in the visioning process. It is organized in terms of the following major themes:

- ❑ How We Work
- ❑ How We Play
- ❑ How We Live
- ❑ How We Get Around
- ❑ How We Learn

Taken together the ideas and suggestions described here paint a picture of Riverside that preserves the best of the past while also pursuing new dreams for an even better future.



## HOW WE WORK

### Economic and Workforce Development

**Riversiders pursue the American Dream. We focus on creating economic development opportunities that provide high skilled, high paid employment for all members of our community.**

“We need to help our small businesses market themselves so Riverside’s restaurants and shops are not run just by national big box chains and Riverside can feel more homey.” – Vision Festival

“Riverside needs an economic/redevelopment boost – much like the inner harbor in Baltimore, Maryland – it needs an “Eiffel Tower” to attract people.” (Stakeholder Interview)

“The City must attract the right kinds of businesses to increase the number of white collar/professional jobs.” – Visioneer

“We need to attract employers that provide jobs paying far higher than just the minimum wage.” – Visioneer

During the visioning process, residents told us that they moved to Riverside for many reasons. Most came for a better job, the opportunity to own their home, a chance for a fresh start or to allow

their children to get a good education. The shared, underlying motivation is the desire Riversiders have to provide a better life for themselves and their families.

To continue to make this dream a reality for all members of our community, Riverside must position itself to attract the types of employers that can offer workers greater opportunities to move upward on the economic ladder while also providing the City with a larger non-retail tax base needed to finance improved public services and other investments that make Riverside an attractive place to live. The goal is to provide better paying local jobs for the large population of blue-collar workers now living in Riverside, while also creating more high-skilled, professional career opportunities for graduates of our local colleges and universities who also wish to live and work in Riverside.

In the coming years the opportunity to achieve these economic development goals has never been better as more and more employers are choosing to move eastward into the Inland Empire in search of available land and reduced labor costs. The challenge for Riverside is to



attract our share of these new employers while also being selective, making certain we target those employers that best fit our vision for the future of Riverside. This deliberate approach is necessary as many logistics and industrial firms are among those migrating eastward, but Riverside has only limited land available for such development. We must be careful to still have space available in later years to offer the even more lucrative high end manufacturing and professional service firms that are sure to follow.

To attract these high end employers, Riverside must continue to be the kind of community that will appeal to high skilled educated workers needed to fuel a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. This educated workforce includes both homegrown graduates from the four local colleges and universities but also the many workers moving into the Inland Empire from the coastal counties. Riverside must work to ensure that it becomes the City of choice for these newest migrants. Given the rich architectural and arboreal legacy enjoyed by Riverside, efforts to improve K-12 education, enhance public safety, provide a sufficient supply of quality housing for all income groups, and adding to its cultural and life amenities will go a long way toward achieving this important goal while also meeting the critical social needs of existing



residents.

The economic development strategy must also support and nurture new small businesses created by local entrepreneurs. There is a strong desire on the part of Riverside residents to shop and eat in local stores and restaurants owned and operated by fellow residents, rather than rely entirely on national retail chains that do not share a personal investment in the local community. This desire can be fulfilled, in part, by leveraging the largely untapped strengths of the local Latino and other ethnic communities – an affinity for hard work, reliance on family members for labor and capital, and a drive for self-employment. Ideas and innovations generated by the university community constitute another local source for small businesses which if successful may later grow into much larger enterprises that can serve as anchors for the local economy.

Given limited resources, City Hall cannot achieve all these economic development goals by itself. Instead, it needs to tap the collective energy and creativity of the community's diverse population and institutions. The role of government is to create the conditions under which people helping themselves will also contribute to the improvement and economic growth of the entire community. Using these ideals as its

foundation, Riverside will once again become a full spectrum regional economic center, providing its residents with a wide range of high skilled, upper income career opportunities, while also attracting additional upscale workers who will further invigorate the cities economic and cultural life.

### **Strategic Actions**

Most the recommendations that follow are derived from those presented in the Husing economic development report presented to the City of Riverside in January 2002. They are cited here because they not only reflect the overall vision articulated by participants in the visioning process, but if successfully implemented would help bring it about. This is especially true for those recommendations derived from the principle that “Riverside will only be able to lure high tech, professional and corporate headquarters operations if it is regarded as a high quality place to live.”<sup>3</sup>

- ❑ Pursue housing, educational, cultural, and other quality of life programs that will support an overall economic development program designed to increase the appeal of Riverside to high-skilled workers moving to the region or graduating from its local colleges and universities.

- ❑ Develop a marketing campaign to attract high skilled, upper income workers to the City that would be developed around the stories of real residents that discovered Riverside for themselves and then decided there was no other place they would rather be.
- ❑ Pursue a marketing campaign to increase awareness among high-end firms of the economic benefits of moving to Riverside to take advantage of the increasing influx of high-skilled workers (skilled technicians, professionals, and executives) from the coastal communities that are moving inland in search of more affordable housing.
- ❑ Develop a business recruitment policy that allocates industrial land to targeted industries that provide high skilled, high paying employment opportunities and that will enhance the sales or fuel tax base. Say “no” to short-term business opportunities that do not fit with the long-term vision as stated in Dr. Husing’s report.
- ❑ Pursue an economic development strategy in partnership with local universities and colleges:
  - Determine, support, and promote the economic development potential of research now being conducted at UCR and other local academic institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> John E. Husing, Ph.D., City of Riverside Economic Development Issues, Part III – Strategy, page 3, January 7, 2002.

- Create “incubator” networks for new industries derived from university research with a streamlined permit and licensing process and basic administrative tools and equipment.
- Develop a cooperative career placement system that will place local college graduates with local firms seeking high-skilled workers.
- Encourage more developments like the University Research Park and the arts driven efforts for downtown.
- ❑ Focus on developing locally owned small independent businesses by lowering barriers to entry:
  - Streamline the business licensing and permitting processes to support local entrepreneurs. This strategy should also be used to attract businesses to Riverside in targeted industries that wish to relocate.
  - Specifically encourage restaurant and retail development by local entrepreneurs.
  - Collaborate with the private business sector to create micro-enterprise programs that provide entrepreneurial training.
  - Provide assistance in developing business plans, applying for necessary permits and licensing, gaining financing, obtaining equipment, marketing and networking for new business owners.
- Conduct an aggressive, multilingual outreach campaign for entrepreneur training to encourage new Hispanic/Latino and other minority businesses.
- ❑ Create an inventory of outdated industrial buildings to determine the viability of re-adaptive use—especially structures that have unique historic characteristics that are attractive to businesses.
- ❑ Market the City’s low utility rates to attract new businesses and as a support strategy for a long-term annexation program.
- ❑ Increase incentives for businesses to use non-polluting, renewable energy sources such as solar power in new developments and redevelopment projects—this will improve the City’s image, create opportunities for new industries to manufacture and distribute such systems, and reduce air pollution. The City’s business recruitment policy should specifically target those companies that can contribute to the vision of a clean environment in Riverside.
- ❑ Deal head on with air pollution and traffic—related to the imbalance between housing in Riverside and jobs in other cities.
- ❑ Increase code enforcement, especially for rental properties, and maintenance of all private facilities.

- ❑ Continue programs like Share the Pride Riverside. Market events such as the Orange Blossom Festival to get the word out that Riverside is a place where things are happening.
- ❑ Take a leadership role in—coordinating economic development with other nearby communities.
  - Encourage SANBAG and WRCOG to work together to prepare a systematic report on how the Inland Empire is doing, with the report to be presented annually at the Business Press' *State of the Inland Empire* meeting.
  - Host an Inland Summit, bringing together the mayors of Riverside, Ontario, and San Bernardino, along with the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, and such groups as SANBAG, WRCOG, IEEP Monday Morning Group, and Inland Empire to identify a regional vision, set priorities, and decide how to make it happen.
  - Steer industries that can offer good job opportunities to Riverside residents but which may not enhance Riverside's quality of life or do not meet the new higher standards to other nearby communities.



## HOW WE PLAY

Arts/Culture/Entertainment  
Parks/Recreation/Libraries  
Physical Amenities

**Riverside is an oasis. This City combines trees, water, and the arts to create a distinctive comfortable gathering place that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike.**

“We should incorporate more water and color into our local architecture instilling a feeling of comfort and tranquility.” – Vision Festival

“We need to promote good things that Riverside has to offer such as the Orange Blossom Festival and Downtown Wednesday night. We need to get the word out to the whole city about the good things the City does on a regular basis.” – Visioneer

“We need trash cans, better drinking fountains and air fresheners; bicycle paths; library; museum; better restrooms; skate park; more lights; fences around parks; more flowers; more park employees; more swings; more games.” – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Youth Visioneer

“I recommend a drastic increase in multi-purpose community centers to facilitate intergenerational and intercultural collaborations, which will help nurture understanding,

acceptance, respect, creativity, inclusivity, and flexibility.” – Vision Festival

The image of Riverside as an oasis reflects both the spirit that inspired the founders of the City and the hopes that today’s residents have for its future. An oasis, however, is more than just a fertile or green area in the middle of the desert, or a respite from the monotony of suburban sprawl. It is also a gathering place that provides relief from dreary routine and by doing so nourishes the body, mind, and spirit. In this respect, Riverside has already been blessed. Not only is it a natural oasis due to the influence of the Santa Ana River, that quality has been greatly enhanced by the efforts of the many different people who have settled here. Over the years, they worked together to create an urban forest to grace the streets, designed public buildings of great beauty to

inspire civic virtues, and built distinctive neighborhoods in which to enjoy easy, relaxed, quiet lives.

Despite the great accomplishments of the past, the ideal of Riverside as an oasis remains an incomplete reality. An oasis should provide most everything needed in life and yet residents still have to leave the City to satisfy many of their needs and desires. Many must travel long distances outside the City to reach their jobs, taking precious time away from their families and neighborhoods. Others complain they have to drive elsewhere to find the upscale shops they desire. Although there is a flourishing local art scene, many still feel they must drive to LA or Orange County to fully satisfy their cultural yearnings. While the presence of some new restaurants and shops have added new life to downtown Riverside, many still do not see enough happening in the heart of the City to give them a compelling reason to visit or live there.

Many Riversiders believe, however, that the City is on the verge of recapturing its place as the destination city of the Inland Empire. They envision a city wide renaissance with downtown Riverside as the focal point. They see it as the central gathering place for both residents of the City and visitors from throughout the region, all of whom are drawn to its many

dining, shopping, and entertainment options.

According to one Riverside resident, in the future, the ideal day might begin with sailing on the lake in Fairmont Park or with a young couple taking a small paddleboat ride in the early evening hours. Later, they could enjoy a nice dinner at one of the many fine restaurants in downtown Riverside. Afterwards, they would stroll along the pedestrian mall or nearby side streets to explore some of the great local shops for which Riverside has now become so famous. Later, they might take in the latest Broadway revival show at the renovated Fox Theater or an outdoor evening concert at the new outdoor public plaza. They might end the night with late night jazz at a local club or meet friends at one of the many coffee shops which dot the landscape.

This picture also describes a Riverside that has also become a



“cool” place for students from UCR and the other three colleges and universities, as well as other members of the university community, to spend their time and money. Now, rather than leaving Riverside on a weekend night in search of something to do, they prefer to stay in town where they can soak up the unique urban atmosphere of Old Riverside. In fact, downtown Riverside and surrounding neighborhoods have become a haven for artists and many other creative



types who have been drawn to the unique cultural mix that has emerged from the many ethnic communities now living in the City. By embracing the arts and those who create them, the City has succeeded not only in using the arts to help bridge cultural and social barriers but also as a catalyst for downtown renewal.

At the same time, the City has retained its small town feel, helped in part by high quality historic preservation efforts that have benefited both downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Quaint, historic signs and markers throughout the downtown area add to a pedestrian ambiance. Although most remain as single-family dwellings, some Victorian homes have been turned into bed and breakfast inns that are popular with the many tourists who come to town. Other visitors prefer to stay at the Mission Inn or the new 4-star hotel that towers near the convention center.

Added to this mix of visitors are the many people who have chosen to live in downtown Riverside, where there are a variety of mixed-use developments characterized by stores at the street level and apartments and studios on the upper floors. These new upscale dwellings have created a new downtown residential community and with it a variety of stores,



restaurants, cultural activities and other services to cater to this population. Many of these new stores and restaurants are locally owned and operated small businesses which are popular with the entire community. Elsewhere in the City, new shopping options have emerged, especially following the completion of the long awaited renovation of Riverside Plaza. The success of local, unique shops and restaurants will likely spark the interest of national upscale retailers who previously may have overlooked the potential within Riverside.

To serve the recreational needs of its residents, there are a wide range of well-maintained, well-lighted parks, from tot-lots and children's playgrounds to ball fields and community gardens, in every neighborhood of the City. As a result, children in Riverside have ample opportunities to be with their family and friends playing in parks with plenty of recreational amenities. There are parks with swimming pools, some with waterslides, and almost all parks have jungle gyms, slides, and swings. Naturally, there are plenty of playing fields for baseball, soccer, basketball, and other sports, and many also have skate parks. There are also a large number of biking, hiking and equestrian trails and a few parks with camps and other secret places where kids can explore and

have their great adventures. Every neighborhood also has a park with a multi-use community center, which offers children art and other indoor activities while providing adult recreational and educational activities, and places to hold community meetings.

While adding to its urban charms, the City has not neglected those elements that first shaped its identity. Just as the Mission Inn has already been restored to its former glory, the urban forest of Riverside is being nurtured and allowed to flourish once again throughout the City. However, in this new century, many feel Riverside may need an even more distinctive landmark to help shape a new positive city image for residents and visitors alike. Some participants in the visioning process have suggested that Riverside needs its own version of an Eiffel Tower to help define the City. What this might be depends upon whom you ask. Some call for a distinctive, cultural landmark designed by a world-class architect. Others suggest using the natural elements of the local environment in terms of color or water to weave into the existing fabric of the City. Some believe this could take the form of a variety of fountains, pools, canals, and other creative water work designs incorporated into both public places and new buildings. Allowing the nearby river to flow in this manner, at least in a symbolic way, through the heart of the City would instill a feeling of comfort and tranquility in both residents and visitors alike, reinforcing the ideal of Riverside as an oasis for those seeking an escape from harsher realities. In effect, the Riversiders of today are considering possible ways to add

their own worthy contribution to the architectural legacy bestowed upon them by past generations.

## **Strategic Actions**

- Work with the arts community to reach new, unanticipated audiences and build community cohesiveness through arts programs.
  - Appoint a special events coordinator or department, similar to the Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events.
  - Create a comprehensive "One Stop Shopping" listing/directory of all arts and cultural organizations, events, schedules and tickets via a website or kiosk.
  - Create a development ordinance requiring a percentage of construction costs be set aside for public art, similar to Reno, Nevada, (2% of construction costs) or Brea (1.5% on all projects with a value over \$1.5 million).
  - Create greater partnerships between government, business, and education to help underwrite and develop additional arts venues and programs, especially for K-12 students.
  - Increase marketing efforts to attract tourists to Riverside's cultural offerings.



- Establish a signature event in addition to the Orange Blossom Festival that will draw local, regional, and national audiences.
- Coordinate sessions on best management practices and foster partnerships among the various arts and cultural groups to increase their viability.
- ❑ Development guidelines must center on protecting and enhancing the urban forest, particularly citrus and shade trees.
  - Expand greenbelts.
  - Provide incentives to increase open space easements, for example along Victoria Avenue.
  - Create design guidelines to extend the City's citrus heritage and maintain the rural character, with greater use of shade trees in parking lots and plazas.
  - Encourage development that combines trees and buildings to form places that people can use.
- ❑ Riverside should be inspired by its name and allow the river to flow, at least in a symbolic way, through the heart of the City.
  - Create policies and guidelines that encourage water features in public places, retail areas, and in new buildings.
  - Create a major water feature as a landmark draw to the downtown area, such as a lake surrounded by shops and restaurants.
- ❑ Build mixed-use developments that have offices and/or condominiums on the upper floors above the restaurants and shops, to add additional civic energy, as well as provide for increased security.
- ❑ Build on Downtown's strengths; encouraging a great collection of buildings that work in context with one another, a increasing number of eclectic retailers, distinctive restaurants, and government and business offices.
  - Utilize policies that legalize mixed-use development and streamline the process.
  - Create a downtown arts and cultural district that is active during the day, evening and weekends. Encourage synergy between the arts, special events, restaurants, and shops as a primary catalyst for the revitalization of Downtown Riverside (as described in Downtown Specific Plan)
  - Develop an extension to the convention center or other destination to increase capacity and flexibility (part of the Downtown Specific Plan).
  - Provide a variety of housing options within walking distance to increase the downtown population, which will encourage the growth and establishment of more downtown shops, theaters, cafes, and other cultural activities. Chicago, Oakland, and other cities have

- made similar efforts to encourage residential uses as a key way of creating a 24-hour downtown.
- Encourage the universities and colleges to develop student housing in the downtown area, with shuttles to each campus.
- Encourage unique retail combined with national chains in a pedestrian-friendly area. Santa Monica's 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade, Old Monrovia, and Old Pasadena are examples.
- Create a state-of-the-art public transportation system that is environmentally friendly and goes to where people want to go, linking high-use areas without the need to transfer. The combination of a public transportation system and encouragement of arcades will help Downtown to become pedestrian friendly.
- Maintain an ample amount of free parking.
- ❑ Create an extensive network of parks throughout the City with the goal of providing every neighborhood with a park that offers nearby residents ample opportunities for recreation and other outdoor uses.
  - Establish a multi-use community center within each neighborhood park as a central gathering place for nearby residents.
  - Ensure that each community center includes a library (see How We Learn).
  - Provide all the children and youth of Riverside with parks that offer ample recreational and sport facilities.
  - Ensure that each park provides a safe, inviting environment for families and all members of the community. Establish programs to ensure that all parks are well maintained on a frequent schedule, fully-lighted, and regularly patrolled by uniformed city personnel.
  - Enable all residents to easily access nearby open spaces so they can more readily enjoy the natural environment in and around the City, along the river, and in surrounding hills.

## HOW WE LIVE

### Housing

**We empower neighborhoods. We listen to each other and pay attention to the details because it matters. Neighborhoods enable the City, and residents to work together to solve the needs of all.**

“New developments seem to be well thought out with attractive homes, river and parks.” – Visioneer

“History and architecture are highly valued here and are seen as assets that create a sense of community. Residents want to preserve what makes the City unique.” – Stakeholder

“Many individual families have formed a unique, long lasting bond that has turned the entire block into one big family.” – Visioneer

Most Riversiders see the anticipated growth of the City over the next ten to twenty years as both an opportunity and a threat. Growth is seen as an opportunity because new economic development promises to bring with it higher skilled, better paying jobs, the revitalization of downtown Riverside, and the financial resources needed to enhance

city services. However, there is also fear that growth will overwhelm the City by changing the very qualities that make it an attractive place in which to live and raise a family. In particular, they want to make sure growth does not change the character of the neighborhoods in which they now take such great pride. Even as the City grows, they want to hold onto the unique small town feel most people now cherish. They believe this is more likely to happen if the neighborhoods and the City can find effective ways of working together to achieve their shared vision of what the neighborhoods should look like in the future.

They want to see a Riverside in which home ownership is the norm for all the City’s neighborhoods. In this view, home ownership is seen as an essential ingredient for the social bonds needed to create a livable community. These are neighborhoods in which all residents feel responsible for the maintenance of their properties and so pay special attention to the appearance of their homes and yards. All newcomers to the City share this desire and so willingly assume the responsibility of working hard to ensure the attractive look of their homes.

These are neighborhoods where people respect each other's privacy but where they also know their neighbors and are willing to look out for and to help each other should the need ever arise. It is also a place where more people have good paying jobs in or near the City, so they have more time to spend with their families and in their neighborhoods. These are family oriented neighborhoods, where children can safely play in the streets or if they go to a nearby park, their parents have no need to worry about their safety. These are all well-maintained, well-lighted parks with playing fields, swings, jungle gyms, and slides as well as plenty of open space for kids to run about in. Each neighborhood also has shopping and other services located conveniently nearby, so a trip to the grocery store need not require a trip across town.

Riversiders also want to see a city that retains the look and feel of its older, historic neighborhoods. This is a city in which all the architecturally distinctive, historic homes that give the City its special character have been fully restored. They like the ambience of their established neighborhoods with their tree-lined streets and stately homes. Not surprisingly, they do not like the look



of cookie-cutter houses springing up in or near the City. Instead, they want the design of new housing developments to be inspired by the high standards of Riverside's historic housing stock. These high design standards should apply not only to all new single-family houses built in the City but also to mid- and high-density housing projects that might be built as part of the downtown revitalization effort. These include multi-use developments with stores and offices on the ground floor and condominium apartments on upper floors popular with empty nesters, young professionals, and others seeking a more urban lifestyle.

In this future, Riverside homes remain affordable – people can still get a lot of house for their money, at least compared with what it costs to own a home in the coastal communities. However, the downside of that affordability has been avoided.

Older, single family homes have not been converted into multi-tenant buildings or torn down to make room for cheap, low-income apartments. Instead, the City has taken steps to provide affordable quality, workforce housing for all its existing low-income residents, while also making sure other communities throughout the region are also assuming their reasonable share of this important responsibility.

This is a City where the neighborhoods have successfully worked with the City to address their public safety concerns. In all the neighborhoods, people can out on their front porches on a summer evening without fearing what might be happening on their street. It is a city where residents can confidently tell visitors that yes it is a safe to walk outside at night.

Riverside is also a city that offers full expression to the various ethnic groups living in the City. Celebrating our diversity is not just an occasional ethnic street festival but has become a way of life, especially at the neighborhood level. Community centers established in each neighborhood have allowed various groups to get together for public discussions and other community-building activities. In the process, they have facilitated intercultural collaborations among the many different ethnic groups making up the City and by doing so have strengthened community bonds not only within neighborhoods but also across the City.

Most importantly, Riverside has retained its sense of place and distinct identity rather than merging into the suburban sprawl that otherwise defines much of the region. This is especially true because it remains a city of distinct neighborhoods, each with its own unique look and feel, but yet still part of one Riverside.

In the views of Riversiders, what will make this vision possible is enabling the neighborhoods to have a stronger voice in the decisions that will be shaping the future of the City. Finding an effective way to

empower the neighborhoods so that they can work effectively with the City is seen as the optimal way for dealing with the many opportunities and challenges created by growth.

## **Strategic Actions**

- ❑ Home ownership is vital; high numbers of low cost rentals work against people forming stable, self-healing, self-sufficient communities. Housing policies must be focused on families, striking a balance between taking care of the existing neighborhoods and providing new housing for the desired wave of highly skilled immigrants from the coastal cities.
  - Develop policies and incentives to protect the existing stock of single family, owner-occupied homes. Specifically, provide incentives to restore and preserve the City's historic 20<sup>th</sup> century homes.
  - Develop policies to make it more difficult to convert single-family homes into multi-tenant buildings or tear them down for low-income apartments. Aggressively step up code enforcement on rental units.
  - Generate policies that encourage the conversion from rental to condominiums.
  - Invest in programs that subsidize the purchase price and encourage home-ownership for low-income residents.

- Offer incentives for developing new, affordable housing.
- Encourage condominiums on the upper floors of mid-to high-density mixed-use development in the downtown area, especially for retirees (who may no longer need the large space of a single-family house).
- Eliminate snout houses—those dominated by a garage, often with hidden entrances.
- ❑ Work with the Office of Neighborhoods to ensure that Riverside maintains its unique character by focusing on identifiable neighborhoods. Encourage new areas of the City to create unique identities and ensure that each community has access to adequate city services. (San Diego’s “City of Villages” is an example.)
  - Help policymakers understand that having a mosaic of neighborhoods, each with its own spatial territory and the power to influence its own distinct life style, enriches Riverside.
  - Develop a system to track community needs/services provided and ensure follow-through on city projects aimed at neighborhoods.
  - Ask developers for more funding for necessary services in the communities they develop.
- Adopt standards for development in the General Plan that are clear, certain, and predictable.
- Provide each neighborhood an opportunity to voice its ideas and perspective regarding the application of land use controls.
- Develop codes and guidelines that provide clear direction that enables neighborhood livability and sense of community.
- Encourage urban design standards that create a cohesive nature for each neighborhood.
- Repair current and design new symbolic gateways that reinforce the distinction between the neighborhoods.
- Provide a community center in each neighborhood (for example, a school, a historic structure, a readapted commercial building located at a convenient intersection), which can become an activity node and can include gallery space, an arena for public discussion and other neighborhood meetings.
- ❑ Create a user-friendly transit system that provides residents with a variety of options to quickly and easily travel to any point in the City without having to drive a car. Investigate the potential for using new technology to make transit services more competitive with single passenger automobiles (See How We Get Around).

- ❑ Enhance public safety in all neighborhoods with the goal of reducing the crime rate to a level that will make Riverside one of the safest cities of its size in the state of California.
  - Establish a close working partnership between city police and neighborhood groups, enabling the police to work pro-actively with the community to prevent crime and increase overall public safety.
  - Encourage the schools, Police Department, Parks and Recreation, churches and other community groups to work together to develop and implement comprehensive youth programs, including after school services, designed to provide the City's youth with positive alternatives to gangs and drug use.
  - Improve the overall effectiveness and image of the local police by launching recruitment and training programs.



## HOW WE GET AROUND

### Transportation and Land Use

**Riverside has responded to the traffic challenge by becoming a more self-contained city. Residents have easy access to an efficient, multi-option transportation system that enables them to meet their needs within the community.**

“As population grows we need to be more proactive about accommodating traffic flow.” – Visioneer

“We need a good public transportation system. You cannot have a great, living city without one.” – Vision Festival

“We need more compact, mixed use, walkable communities to avoid sprawl and eliminate unnecessary driving. We should be able to have our homes, jobs and entertainment all close to each other.” – Vision Festival

Most people living in Riverside like the quiet, relaxed lifestyle it offers themselves and their families. They are especially happy with their individual neighborhoods. Each workday, however, this easygoing way of life is put to a severe test for all those Riversiders who must struggle with congested freeway traffic to reach their jobs in Orange and Los Angeles counties. For many residents traffic on the 91 Freeway in particular is seen as undermining their quality of life both because of

the amount of time they must waste on it or because they see it as a barrier that “keeps the town from coming together.” There is also concern that increasing traffic within the City is making it more difficult to move about the town, threatening convenient access to nearby business, stores, and schools. Some are even aware that increasing rail traffic through the City could also make it more difficult to get across town. There is the fear that if growth is not managed properly traffic problems will overwhelm everything, even neighborhoods which are now relatively quiet and peaceful.

Riversiders want their city to be a place where transportation planning and traffic improvements have kept pace with new housing construction and new companies moving into and near the City. This means new road construction, wider freeways, and other transportation improvements should be an integral part of all new land use developments, rather than an afterthought. The ideal Riversiders have in mind is an efficient transportation system that provides residents with more than one option for getting around town. For this reason, Riversiders want to see a public transit system whose design is closely



tailored to their real needs that people will want to use on a regular basis because it is convenient, clean, safe, and easy. A few citizens put forth the idea that rather than a few full-size buses that come only once an hour, they prefer access to a much larger fleet of small, mini-buses that make frequent, consistent runs and can circulate closer to where they live and intend to travel.

There is also a desire to make Riverside a pedestrian-friendly city in both established and new neighborhoods. Some have suggested the development of more compact, mixed-use walkable communities to avoid sprawl and to minimize the need for unnecessary driving. This is seen as one way to accommodate increasing growth while also preserving open space and retaining the rural flavor that many existing residents still enjoy in Riverside. This is not surprising since residents enjoy having easy access from their neighborhoods to shopping, parks, churches, and schools and so believe such convenience and accessibility should remain a part of existing neighborhoods while being built into the designs of all new ones. Traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, more and better traffic lights and signs, and better enforcement of speed laws were also suggested as ways of reducing traffic through neighborhoods.

There is also a recognition that having more and higher quality jobs in and near Riverside will enable more residents to avoid the long tiring commutes which now drain so much time and energy out of their lives and their communities. In this respect, a more self-contained Riverside

in which residents can meet all their employment, shopping, recreational, and entertainment needs locally without having to travel elsewhere will greatly enhance the quality of life they now enjoy.



### Strategic Actions:

- ❑ Develop an integrated approach for transportation and land use planning to ensure that the needed transportation infrastructure is in place to accommodate trips generated by new housing and commercial developments.
- ❑ Encourage the development of more compact mixed-use pedestrian-friendly communities that are also within easy walking distance of transit stops, supporting the use of public transit as a viable alternative to the automobile.

- ❑ Design a citywide transit system that makes it convenient and easy to go anywhere in town without getting into a private car, including the use of neighborhood hubs which facilitate access to the transit system.
- ❑ Develop design guidelines to encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment throughout the City that also supports public transit and other alternatives to the automobile.
- ❑ Encourage economic development that generates well-paying local jobs, improves the jobs-housing balance, and reduces the need for residents to commute long distances to jobs elsewhere in the region.
- ❑ Work closely with county and regional transportation agencies to develop and implement solutions that will lead to the long-term improvement of the freeway system.
- ❑ Take steps, in cooperation with other public agencies and rail companies, to mitigate negative impacts stemming from anticipated increases in rail traffic:
  - Provide transportation mobility and safety improvements along all roads and highways that intersect rail corridors.
  - Reduce train noise that intrudes upon nearby residential neighborhoods.
- ❑ Improve local traffic circulation by improving street light synchronization, repairing and resurfacing streets, and

implementing solutions to specific arterial and intersection problems as they are identified. Another suggestion to improve local traffic is to reopen closed streets and reconnect streets to the historic grid.

- ❑ Protect residential neighborhoods from overflowing traffic by implementing traffic calming techniques, improving enforcement of traffic laws, and creating programs to discourage speeding.
- ❑ Support the economic vitality of downtown Riverside by providing a variety of mixed-use housing options that enable more people to both live and work downtown, and by providing ample free parking for visitors to the downtown area.
- ❑ Develop a comprehensive network of bike paths and bike lanes that will facilitate the convenient and safe use of bicycling for both commuting and recreational purposes throughout the City.

## HOW WE LEARN

### K-12 Education: Parental, Community, and Business Involvement

**Excellence in education is the key to economic growth. Riversiders work together to achieve quality education at all levels.**

“There needs to be a partnership between local government, the community, and our schools to meet the educational and career development of our youth.” – Vision Festival

“When I grew up in Riverside, I felt like the local schools here gave me the tools to compete effectively at college with other students from all over the country. It was not long ago that the K-12 experience was fine. We just need to get back to the fundamentals so that the local schools can be good again.” – Vision Festival

“We should strive to have the same high quality education in all our neighborhoods, i.e. the same high standards in our poor neighborhoods as in upper income ones. If we invest in education, we will not have to invest in more jails.” – Vision Festival

If family is the engine that motivates Riversiders, then education is the fuel. Many who grew up and went to school in Riverside feel strongly that the education they received here prepared them well for

the world at large. However, they are concerned the present school system may not be as effective as it once was. If left uncorrected, not only could this make it difficult to attract the high-skilled workforce needed to ensure the economic prosperity of Riverside but it could also endanger the economic future of their own children as well. They acknowledge that much of this problem may be more one of perception rather than reality. The top 15% of Riverside students can still compete effectively with other top students from anywhere else in California, but the overcrowded schools, the increase in gangs and the deterioration of school facilities is dragging down overall test scores, creating a perception of low performance on the part of Riverside schools. They believe greater investments in education are essential but also that improving local schools is a community-wide responsibility, requiring a partnership between the schools, local government, businesses, and parents.

They envision an education-friendly city where schools are the priority. Students enjoy small class sizes, have universal access to up-to-date educational technologies and a top ranked public library system,

and all classes are held in clean, well-maintained, environmentally friendly school-buildings. This is a city where high quality educational standards are applied to and achieved in all neighborhoods, not just the upper income ones. There are also plenty of after-school programs in arts, music, athletics, and the sciences to help students who want to pursue those studies in more depth. Although a very high percentage of high school graduates go on to receive a college education, Riverside also offers a wide range of educational options by providing students who are not interested in going onto college with high quality trade and technical schooling. Regardless of whether they are college-bound or not, this is also a school system that has sufficient counseling services available to help all students make informed decisions about their academic and career futures.

In the future, this is a school system that receives direct support and help from the entire community. Parents are intimately involved in the education of their children, helping with their homework and attending parent/teacher conferences. Some parents are even viewed as co-teachers able to volunteer time to spend in the classroom, working alongside the professional educators. Corporate

involvement in local schools is also a large factor. The local school curriculum has been designed with input from local businesses and the university community to better equip high school graduates with the aptitudes, knowledge, and skills required for the jobs of the future. In partnership with the local schools, these same corporations also offer accelerated internships and apprenticeships for students seeking real world work experience in addition to their academic training.

Riverside is also seen as an education-friendly city because it is the home of four institutions of higher learning. Riverside's universities and college were frequently mentioned as one of the City's great strengths. This concentration of universities and colleges is unusual for a city this size and can only be found in a handful of communities nationwide. The University of California, Riverside, is the fastest growing campus in



the UC system. It has a well-endowed research program and has significant potential to benefit the high-end sectors. Riverside Community College is considered the best such facility in the Inland Empire. The two faith-based universities, California Baptist and La Sierra, are considered leaders in their fields.

However, unlike other similar cities in the country that are home to

several universities and colleges, Riverside is not yet perceived as a university town. Many Riversiders want to see this changed. They want Riverside to become a town where college faculty prefer to live in the City and students like spending their free time in what they see as an exciting, interesting community. They also would like to see a Riverside in which the university community has a stake in the future of the City and offers its expertise to help with economic and neighborhood development. This is a city where residents see the universities as inviting places to attend cultural events and should they decide to do so to continue their own education. In effect, they see a Riverside in which the colleges and universities are an integral part of the entire community to the benefit of all its residents.

### **Strategic Actions**

- ❑ Continue to encourage support for bonds to improve education facilities and public libraries.
- ❑ Set aside adequate resources to increase pre-school programs, which help ensure children are ready for the K-12 system.
  - Develop incentives for childcare facilities in the neighborhoods and at businesses.
  - Ensure these facilities are located in places that are convenient to working parents—at community centers for example.

- ❑ Encourage community and business involvement in schools, in conjunction with the Chambers of Commerce and other business and community groups.
  - Work with the school districts to create volunteer programs that provide students with needed career counseling services, establishing a system to ensure that no student will be left behind.
  - Create programs that position parents as “teaching assistants” who can work with the professional educators to add extra activities, more personal attention and supervision to K-12 classes.
  - Work with local faith-based communities to reach out to parents and care givers, forming inter-generational support groups and programs to help them play a more effective role in helping with the education of their own children (community centers will be an excellent place to base these activities).
  - Collaborate on programs that link the needs of local businesses with the colleges and universities. These programs also reach down into the secondary schools to help equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to compete effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and help students better understand the

linkage between their schoolwork and future career opportunities.

- Take the lead on mentoring programs that involve community members, including internships and apprenticeships for students who may want to pursue a trade rather than go to college.
- Expand programs such as RCC's Passport to College scholarship and college awareness program, which is designed to raise educational aspirations of Riverside students and increase the college going rate for the regions high school graduates. This innovative community-wide program is a partnership between business, education, community, and the family.
- ❑ Ensure adequate after-school programs for K-12 children, that provide additional enrichment classes, offer children a chance to be in a safe and nurturing environment (rather than home alone or getting into mischief and gang-related activities).
  - Work with schools to provide after-school activities onsite, including remedial programs that may involve community members acting as tutors and mentors.
  - Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to organize more after-school sports activities and teams.
  - Work with senior groups to develop multi-generational programs where seniors and youth work

together. Multi-use community facilities should be designed to meet the needs of all age groups, facilitating joint senior/youth programs.

- ❑ Ensure that the universities and colleges integrate fully within the neighborhoods that surround them—decreasing the “town & gown” separation.
  - Identify appropriate locations for off-campus classrooms throughout the City but principally in the downtown area—offer adult education programs for higher education and certification.
- ❑ Expand and modernize the City's public library system ensuring that it becomes a premier information and learning resource for the entire city easily accessible from all neighborhoods.
  - Establish a library learning center in all city neighborhoods.
  - Promote the use of the public library system as a key element in the provision of citywide after-school programs.

## Chapter 2

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# **Assets and Opportunities: What Makes Riverside Special**

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### **WIDE HORIZONS**

The vision for Riverside is based on an understanding of the ideals, dreams, assets and challenges facing the City. Riverside is a delightful combination of old and new.

With Mount Rubidoux casting its long shadow 1,337 feet above the City, and groves of citrus trees flanking its perimeters, Riverside is a place where one can kick back and enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds the City. The earliest inhabitants knew the value of the area's rich soil and mild climate, and it did not take long for an enterprising group of East-coast pioneers to realize their quest for Utopia ended in what is now known as Riverside.

The early settlers set a precedent that would eventually lead to Riverside's premiere identity as the orange capitol of the nation and to a lesser renown, its designation as The City of Trees. Its turn-of-the-century wealth is evident in the architecture that flourishes in a city that is a blend of agriculture and higher education. A combination of ornate Italian Renaissance, Mission, Spanish Mediterranean, and Queen Anne-

style homes, creates a sense of place that distinguishes the City from being just a sprawling bedroom community for Los Angeles and Orange Counties. It is not just the "next-town over."

When asked during the visioning process what makes Riverside special, the residents and businesses repeatedly came to the same conclusion during the visioning process. Most agree the City's greatest assets are its natural resources – human and geographic. Riverside is full of opportunities to explore and a place one can call home.

### **REGIONAL INFLUENCE**

Nestled alongside the Jurupa Mountains, the Pedley Hills, Mount Rubidoux, and the Santa Ana River, the City's climate and location has historically drawn travelers, permanent residents, and new businesses for the same reasons: natural beauty; affordability, good living, and an indefinable "magic" that keeps people within its boundaries.

During the visioning process, Riverside stakeholders said they came and stayed because of the City's natural inland "oasis," and as a place where "intelligent, industrious, and enterprising people" could live and thrive.

Being accessible is a prominent feature that continues to lure people and businesses. The City lies between the intersections of Highways 60, 91, and 215; and is within 20 minutes of the Ontario International Airport. It is 57 miles from Los Angeles and 90 miles from San Diego; and within close proximity to beaches, mountains, and the cultural venues in these neighboring counties. Intermodal rail and truck traffic move cargo from the coast through Riverside to mainland America. Because the City is an inland port of moving goods (products) and services (people), the region has taken advantage of the location evident by the growing warehousing, trucking, logistics, and distribution industry.

Commuting is made easier thanks to a Metrolink station in downtown Riverside and La Sierra. The opportunistic location and regional influence of the City has drawn considerable attention. The Riverside-San Bernardino area ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of 200 metropolitan areas in the annual Forbes/Milken Best Places for Business and Career Report for 2002. This is a jump from its 27<sup>th</sup> place listing in 2001. The report cites such indicators as one-and five-year salary and growth indicators. The U.S. Department of Commerce also cites Riverside (as part of the Inland Empire) as one of the fastest growing metropolitan

areas in the United States. The California Department of Finance estimates that the Inland Empire's population will climb by 59 percent within 12 years.

With lower property rates and reduced utility costs (thanks to a municipally owned service), ample water supply, and its position at a transportation crossroads, Riverside will continue to be a magnet for businesses. The City's fiber optic communications network will only help to attract and retain those businesses that rely on high-speed connections to prosper.

## CITY PRIDE

In comparison to their neighbors in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, residents in Riverside are thankful to not only live in a beautiful city, but also to have a housing market that is affordable. Like their business counterparts, residents have relocated to Riverside for an improved quality-of life. That trend is noticeable in the City's percentage of housing and vacancy rates. Of 85,974 housing units available in 2000, only five percent were vacant. The median housing price is \$272,622 compared to \$361,379 median price in Orange County.<sup>4</sup> As of June 2001, approximately 45 percent of Riverside County residents could purchase a median priced home, compared to 27 percent in Orange County and roughly 35 percent in Los Angeles

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<sup>4</sup> Orange County Community Indicators/California Association of Realtors



County. This affordability is an asset and an effective way to develop stable neighborhoods.

Many Riversiders commented during the visioning process that living in Riverside is easy, relaxed, and quiet. They felt that the City provides many of the advantages of a big city but the interaction between people felt like a small town. When interviewed, many people said they could not imagine living anywhere else. They are not alone, apparently, the nation is taking notice too. Places Rated Almanac ranked Riverside as 13<sup>th</sup> among the best places to live in the United States and it has been recognized twice as an All-America City (in 1965 and 1998).

To preserve its history and charm, an active tree community protects and cares for Riverside's trees. Nearly 100,000 eucalyptus, palm, sycamore and pepper trees flourish and are cherished by Riverside residents. Trees are a very important part of the City's heritage and daily life. As many as 50 different plant species were brought here by the City's early settlers from nearly every continent of the world. They continue to grow and prosper along its streets with the best example being Victoria Avenue, which has literally grown to become a linear arboretum.

The area has 51 city parks, 3 county parks and 1 state park that offer everything from boating to horseback riding. There are more than 30 different cultural venues to explore, including the famed Mission Inn and the Orange Blossom Festival. The City is developing an

engaged arts and cultural community and plans are currently underway to construct a Riverside School for the Arts in downtown. "We are at an important crossroads," said one Riverside stakeholder interviewed during the visioning process. "We are expanding the cultural district, and it is not just a boundary, it will be regional. All it takes is a little muscle."

Nearly 53,000 students will call Riverside home in the fall of 2002. They will be attending one of four higher education institutions that include: California Baptist University, La Sierra University, Riverside Community College, and the University of California, Riverside. The talent, creativity, and ability of those 53,000 bring an added asset, resource, and dimension to the City, as well as future potential. "The local community college (has been) a personal turning point in my life. (It) has a great outreach program for older, mid-life returning students. They really make you feel welcome," said one Riverside citizen at the Visioning festival.

## NEIGHBORHOOD SPIRIT

Affordable housing or the colleges and universities may initially draw people but it is the "sense of place" that keeps people here. Riverside's greatest asset is its residents. Much like the citrus trees that spawned the community, Riverside residents have flourished in a city that seeks to be inclusive and progressive, while revering its heritage. Many citizens commented that Riverside was a pleasant surprise, where

people have relocated to retire, raise a family, or to retreat to an environment that is “far from the maddening crowd.” The multi-cultural landscape that exists within the City has consistently been discussed throughout the visioning process. It is not uncommon for multi-generational families to live within a few blocks of one another. “It is quiet and laid back,” said one stakeholder during the visioning process. “Stress does not set in until you get on the freeway.”

Riverside’s community defies a singular label. It attracts families, athletes, artists, educators, students, and worshippers. Residents in 26 distinct neighborhoods share in community pride. These neighborhoods have begun to revitalize from within. With assistance from the City’s Office of Neighborhoods, the residents have become engaged in neighborhood pride and aesthetics, in addition to recognizing community leaders. Said one resident during the Visioning Festival, “My father came here after he retired from New Jersey. I left for college and promised never to come back. But I kept coming back for visits because my family was still here and after awhile, I gained a new appreciation for Riverside.”

As the City grows, home ownership will be integral to neighborhood vitality, because homeowners will want their property and neighborhood to be appealing, livable, and safe. “(I) feel (the City) will be successful if residents feel ownership in the community,” said one visioning stakeholder. The City believes in the same theory and has already created a task force to increase the home ownership rate.

Affordable housing brings families, first-time homebuyers, and a rich, multi-cultural flavor to the City. It also allows teachers, police officers, firemen, and other people who add to the community but may not earn large salaries to live within the community they serve. More than 50 languages are spoken at the City’s two school districts: Alvord Unified and Riverside Unified. The Hispanic Chamber, Asian Indian Chamber, and African-American Chamber of Commerce join the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce in recognizing and tapping into the City’s entrepreneurial spirit.

One stakeholder offered the following statement as an example of the Riverside community when it voluntarily decided to integrate its public schools, “Riverside is the kind of place that when given a chance will always make the decent choice.”

There is a reason why the City has adopted the multi-cultural Raincross icon as its symbol – it recognizes that to be successful it must value and support the contribution of all its citizens.

## Chapter 3

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### CHALLENGES

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Riverside is struggling with its image as a bedroom community. As one visioning participant put it, “a nice place to live but I would not want to visit.” Because of the astronomical housing prices in Orange County and parts of Los Angeles County, many new residents move to Riverside but keep their jobs elsewhere. The City, which once had a distinct identity as a charming Spanish-Mediterranean agriculture-based community, now finds itself in danger of being blurred into the outskirts of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. For some, Riverside is seen as lacking high-paying jobs, entertainment and restaurant venues, as well as upscale retail establishments. For Riverside to prosper – to attract and keep residents and businesses – it must improve that image while preserving its legacy.

Community members identified what they believe to be the major challenges facing Riverside now and in the years ahead. Some of the challenges are threatening to erode the assets and strengths Riverside now enjoys. Some of the challenges are a result of external forces and others are internal problems. Nevertheless, each of these challenges is real and the community expects the City to address these

issues if it is to move forward and achieve the desired vision. The challenges can be viewed grouped into two major categories.

The underlying issues:

- ❑ We need to create a high quality of life.
- ❑ We need to build an inclusive community.
- ❑ We need a sense of place.
- ❑ We need to improve the way City government delivers services and responds to the needs of the community.
- ❑ We need to attract high quality and high paying employment opportunities.

The resulting challenges:

- ❑ Traffic
- ❑ Crime
- ❑ Too few high quality and high paying jobs
- ❑ Pollution
- ❑ Uncontrolled growth

## UNDERLYING ISSUES

### Quality of Life

It will be key for Riverside to attract and retain a wide range of businesses and workers in the future. However, job growth must be balanced with a more integrated effort to enhance the overall quality of life. High-quality public education, safety, job opportunities, environmental health, and housing interrelate in important ways that the City must recognize.

Participants in the visioning process have said that the City is known for offering good value in housing, but is falling short in other areas. For Riverside to become a world-class city, it must offer its residents wonderful leisure/entertainment activities along with attractive jobs, quality places to live and strong schools. Many residents say they must leave the City to shop or attend the theater, for example. They call for more upscale shopping and dining, a full-fledged arts/entertainment program equal to Los Angeles and Orange Counties, and a vibrant downtown that attracts people after hours and on weekends. Riverside has the one true downtown in the Inland Empire and residents want to see it restored to its previous vitality.

### Build an Inclusive Community

Ethnic and cultural diversity is a real strength of Riverside and the City has made great strides in embracing it. However, community members feel that there is still not enough interaction between the

various cultures that define the City and this lack may create future misunderstandings and problems. The City should take a more proactive, leadership role in addressing the social issues, as well as ensuring that growth and economic development benefit all members of the community. Many feel that the City's institutions do not reflect the diversity; they are not reaching out enough to the ethnic communities.

### Maintain a Sense of Place

Riverside began with huge groves of orange trees and many residents strongly believe that the trees must remain, unlike in Orange County. Trees are a significant facet of the City's history and create a unique sense of place, a peaceful ambiance that differentiates us from surrounding urban areas. Low water landscaping with native plants can enhance the look of the City without trying to create an urban forest in the chaparral environment.

Preserving the historic buildings and homes from the 1920s – and blending new buildings in – were also mentioned as key elements defining Riverside. Many private and public buildings have been preserved but it will remain important to ensure that the City's architectural heritage be preserved.

Residents want to improve how the City looks when visitors enter the City, when they drive by on the freeway and when they see

our parks. Some want to add enhancements that bring the river (or at least a sense of the water) closer to the City.

### Improve City Service Delivery

Many participants praise City government for its ability to respond to citizens, citing this visioning process as an example. Although many improvement projects are undertaken, government also needs to address the core root of problems. The City needs to focus more on effective operation of City services, especially ensuring that they keep pace with growth. Participants cited the string of motels on University Avenue (attracting gangs and criminal activity) as an example of the problem. Many mention that the City needs to reduce “red tape” to make it attractive for businesses to start up or locate in Riverside.

On a positive note, residents say that there are many good improvements underway but that most people do not know about them – the City simply needs to do more communicating with its diverse groups of residents.

### Implement a Business Development Strategy

Riverside’s City Council recently adopted a study regarding an economic development strategy by Dr. John Husing<sup>5</sup>. Dr. Husing’s study began in January 2000 in three phases. The first phase focused on

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<sup>5</sup> John E. Husing, Ph.D., City of Riverside Economic Development Issues, Part III, January 7, 2002

data collection, the second phase provided analysis, and the third phase stated forty-three recommendations for consideration and implementation. The Husing study has broad support from Riverside’s business community. The Visioning process used this study as the foundation for economic analysis and subsequent recommendations.

## RESULTING CHALLENGES

### Traffic

Directly related to growth is the high volume of traffic. Overwhelmingly, people are alarmed about traffic – on both freeways and locals roads. In fact, Riversiders cited no other single issue more. Participants believe the transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with the level of growth. They point to increasing traffic disrupting neighborhoods, limiting mobility within the City, and creating long commute times on the freeways.

Because many people live in Riverside but work in other counties, freeway commutes have increased dramatically in the past years. Job growth in Riverside could reduce the traffic jams of people traveling outside the area to jobs. When people live and work in the same community, it also increases their connection to and participation in the community.

Residents cite Van Buren, Alessandro, and Magnolia as particularly onerous roads that need widening and improvement. Some said signal coordination could help improve traffic circulation within

the City. Participants were split on whether traffic-calming devices are actually easing traffic, or whether they are themselves becoming an irritant.

Participants asked for better coordination of housing development and transportation hubs to promote public transportation and alternative modes of travel. Improved bike paths and pedestrian walkways can also be valuable within the City.

## Safety/Crime

Public safety is one of the most important responsibilities of any city government. The perception of public safety is one of the most difficult problems for any city to control. Residents want to be able to sit on their porches and relax, without feeling as if they are in danger. The overwhelming consensus of participants is that there are not enough police for a city the size of Riverside. There are currently 360 sworn officers with a total department of 570. Residents are concerned about response time. They would like more police patrols at night to reduce crime of all sorts, including vandalism, gang activity and graffiti (tagging). Residents would also like police who walk or bike around the neighborhoods and fire personnel who visit the community, so that children can come to know and trust them. This will help police better know the diverse elements of the community and improve the community-police relationship.

Increasing gang activities are a major concern, along with a perceived increase in related drugs and violent acts. Some cite economic problems that frustrate youths and lead to crime. Many fear without stronger preventive steps, more youths will be attracted to gang activities. A wider variety of youth programs and more involvement of the community, schools, and city staff were offered as possible solutions.

Residents are also concerned about the increasing numbers of homeless persons in parks and on the streets. They point to a need for more programs for the homeless, especially for homeless women and children. One idea suggested was public-private partnerships with the many faith-based organizations.

## Jobs and Business Development

Comprehensive business and job growth strategies are imperative to stem the growing gap between population and job growth in Riverside, according to many residents. Large numbers of people are compelled to commute long distances into neighboring counties to seek employment because of the limited availability of local, high paying jobs. The lack of sufficient local jobs contributes to the problems of congestion, air pollution, and excessive time spent commuting – all of which lowers the quality of life of Riverside residents. In addition, the weak job base reflects a weaker business base, and therefore lowers city

tax revenues. This further undercuts the City's ability to provide adequate services.

Many residents underscored the need for increasing the overall job base and ensuring that new jobs meet residents' needs. However, the City needs to have guidelines to balance housing growth and job growth to ensure that the two sectors develop sustainability, not in a lopsided fashion that only exacerbates existing problems. The City should collaborate more with community-based groups in defining what types of businesses are most needed, and remain conscious of also balancing the need for job growth with concerns for environmental sustainability, neighborhood character, and inclusiveness of diverse population groups. Residents articulate a strong interest in generating job-intensive growth in high-income sectors, including high-tech, administrative and high quality retail. Small business growth clustered around residential areas is highly endorsed because it would be job intensive, keep revenue within the community, satisfy consumer needs, and reduce commute times.

Many residents voice an interest in revitalizing the downtown, Riverside Plaza, and Arlington as well as creating nodes of small business clusters around residential areas to provide much needed grocery stores, restaurants, hardware supply stores, cleaners, and pharmacies.

The City should build a stronger alliance of the various chambers of commerce, other business groups, and community-based

groups in formulating a plan to drive integrated economic growth. City leadership must be cooperative, supportive and flexible in its collaboration for commercial and business development. Partnerships that are more creative must be sought between the City government and the entrepreneurial sector to enact the identified economic development policies.

## Housing

A variety of inter-related housing challenges face Riverside in the near future. Historically, Riverside has provided affordable, quality, diverse housing opportunities. In recent years, the City has responded to the need to provide more affordable housing, especially as high prices have driven residents out of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. However, concerns abound regarding the potential unbalance of high-density, multi-family, affordable housing versus lower-density, single-family housing in Riverside. Many voice the concern that high-density housing will not be well maintained and supported by adequate City infrastructure (transportation, utilities, police, schools, code enforcement, etc.) and will lead to increases in crime, pollution, and blight. Additionally, since many historic single-family homes have been converted into multi-family rental units over the past 50 years, community members are concerned about the loss of the community's historic character and charm.

Directly related to housing is the evolution of the City's industrial and commercial base, which is projected to feature higher numbers of white-collar versus blue-collar jobs. Housing costs are likely to continue to increase with this new employment demographic, as white collar workers will drive up demand and costs for fewer single-family homes. Fewer lower-income, blue-collar workers will be able to afford home ownership in Riverside.

## Schools

Many residents feel that one of Riverside's strengths is its schools and their proximity to neighborhoods. Residents are also confident that Riverside Unified and Alvord Unified School District employs a dedicated and hard-working teaching staff. However, residents are concerned that the quality of the education provided by Riverside schools has declined in recent years. Residents cite this decline as a direct result of overcrowding, the increasing presence of gangs and the deterioration of school facilities. Residents would like to see more money given to schools to upgrade their facilities and increase their resources. They would also like to see more schools (especially K-12) built and existing schools expanded to accommodate Riverside's rapid population growth.

Residents also expressed concerns about what they perceived as the decline in the number of high school students graduating and the amount of high school graduates that are going on to pursue college or

vocational careers. Some attribute this decline to lack of college and career counseling. They believe schools need to spend more time preparing students for the future, whether it be by increasing college preparation and counseling efforts or encouraging students to explore vocational and trade school opportunities. Some residents' feel a great deal can be accomplished in this area if high schools collaborate with the wealth of college and universities Riverside has. Schools and universities can work together to create and maintain programs that will ensure more students understand their career options and complete the course work required to pursue these options.

Residents indicated a need for after-school programs and other youth activities. In particular, effective programs are needed for latch key kids who would benefit from programs designed to keep kids on campus by providing them with fun, creative outlets to channel their energy. This might include art and crafts classes, dance instruction, computer, and nature hikes. University and college students, especially those undergrad students pursuing degrees in education and social welfare, may be interested in coordinating and leading some of these activities for course credit. College students may also be interested in participating in mentoring programs and other volunteer activities that will afford them the opportunity to be involved in the advancement of their community. Local youth might be more inspired to get involved in community-advancement activities if they see a strong level commitment from college-age participants.



## Neighborhoods

Maintaining neighborhoods as the center of community life is a key step the City can take to build a positive future. Residents are proud of their communities and the small town feel. The challenge is to support the unique neighborhoods while working to halt urban decay and turn around deteriorating areas. There is agreement that residents themselves must work with the City, taking collective responsibility for the place they live in.

Residents point to declining areas such as Riverside Plaza, University Avenue, Arlington, and the Eastside. Overwhelmingly, participants want to clean up alleys and streets and improve the streetscaping and landscaping. Absentee landlords and the increasing number of rentals versus owner-occupied dwellings are seen as contributing to deterioration of neighborhoods – residents want the City to ensure code compliance, especially for multi-family dwellings. However, they point out that many elderly or immigrant residents may not understand or be physically able to keep their property up to code. So they believe there is a need for more city services and communication, especially in lower income, underserved neighborhoods.

Residents understand the need for growth, but want growth in a sustainable and intelligent manner that maintains the integrity of neighborhoods. They specifically do not want to look too uniform like

other neighboring communities or lose the special sense of place that Orange County once had but which is still a part of Riverside.

## Parks and Open Space

If Riverside were not to develop well-integrated open space and recreational options, Riverside could move further toward becoming yet another indistinguishable sprawling, dense, traffic-choked community in Southern California. That comment reflects the opinion of the majority of participants. Concerns expressed centered on the lack of parks and park developments, unavailable funding for parks and maintenance, poor lighting in existing parks, and decreased safety within parks where homelessness occurs. More visible park employees (in their green trucks) would increase the comfort level of those who like to use the parks.

Many believe that parks without recreational developments are not parks at all and they would like to see more options for children to play – many suggested adding basketball and tennis courts, public pools, and swings. There is a strong request to establish more parks and increase maintenance on existing parks.

While there is ample open space, there is also the concern for maintaining those areas, given the pace of growth and urban development within Riverside. Many are opposed to losing existing open space to sprawling subdivisions that do not reflect Riverside's rich historical architecture. Residents suggest maintaining open space while

keeping greenery, greenbelts, and incorporating public paths that can be used for jogging, walking, and other recreational activities. As the City continues to grow, many are also concerned that new housing

developments will deplete open space and therefore affect the ambiance of Riverside.

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## **APPENDICES**

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## **A. RIVERSIDE'S "AT A GLANCE"**

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(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)

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## B. VISION PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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The City Council invited 24 community leaders to participate on the Vision Planning committee. Twenty-one citizens accepted the challenge to serve on the Vision Planning Committee (VPC). The VPC provided direction and input throughout the Visioning process. Over a series of four meetings, the committee discussed and addressed diverse community issues. The Wallgraphics are a summary of the discussions.

Joe Frederickson	Vision Planning Committee, Chair	Brian Loew	Parking, Traffic and Streets Commission, Chair
Pat Ames	City Government	Rose Mayes	Fair Housing Council
Mark Ashton	Galleria/President of La Sierra Chamber	Scott Parks	Park and Recreation Commission, Chair
Ronald Bennett	Alvord Unified School District (AUSD)	Susan Rainey	Riverside Unified School District (RUSD)
Manuel Carrasco	Riverside Neighborhood Partnership	Sal Rotella	Riverside Community College (RCC)
Ron Ellis	California Baptist University	Joan Wells	Riverside Community College (RCC)
Bill Galloway	Arlington Community Committee	Marjorie Von Pohle	Friday Morning Group
Larry Geraty	La Sierra University	Susan McKee	University of California Riverside (UCR)
Nick Goldware	Monday Morning Group	Dave Warren	University of California Riverside (UCR)
Steve Kroh	Architect	Lori Yates	Victoria Avenue Forever, Chair
Dave Leonard	Planning Commission, Chair		

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## **C. VISION PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING WALLGRAPHICS**

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(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)

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## D. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

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### **CITY OF RIVERSIDE - VISIONING KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS QUESTIONNAIRE**

The City of Riverside is undertaking a community visioning effort to define the future of the City. The visioning process seeks to gain as much public input as possible regarding the desired future for Riverside and ultimately to create a vision of where the community wants to be in the next ten to fifteen years. The visioning process will frame directions and priorities for the upcoming General Plan update.

We will be reaching out to as many people in our community as possible. As a first step we have identified a few key individuals to interview to get a better understanding of what to expect from the process and how to best reach out to the various members of our community.

I'd like to ask you a few questions to help us begin the process.

1. Name one or two things that makes Riverside a special place to live, work or play?
2. Name one example of a key issue that we are sure to hear about throughout this entire process?
3. Which individuals or groups should we be sure to consult in updating the vision of Riverside? What would their role or contribution be? How can we involve them best?
4. Who has not been represented well in the past? Why? What suggestions would you have for involving them more fully?
5. Do you have any other suggestions for the City and staff that would help us with outreach for the Visioning project?
6. Please recommend one person to be trained as a Visioneer.

**NOTE:**

The Key Stakeholder Interviews were conducted under the rule of confidentiality. The purpose of the interviews was to guide the project team on key issues and to confirm the approach for the project. Therefore, only the questions are included in this report.



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## E. CURRICULUM GUIDE AND CHILDREN DRAWINGS

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### OVERVIEW

For a city to be thorough in its desire to envision and capture the community's shared vision for its future – it must incorporate everyone's voice, including its young people. As the future voters and decision-makers of this city, our children deserve an opportunity to help shape the development of Riverside in an effort to improve life for us all. For this reason, the City of Riverside turned to the school districts and arts community to determine what the children of Riverside are thinking and feeling about the future of their city. The principal tool was a Youth Curriculum Guide, which was provided to the local school districts and the Riverside Arts Council.

The Curriculum Guide was a step-by-step guidebook and packet for educators, which offered a series of hands-on activities for children in kindergarten through twelfth grades. The guide is designed for educators seeking an easy simple way to involve youth in the community planning process. By using this packet, they could offer them:

- ❑ Opportunities to share their opinions and ideas about the future of the city with other members of the community; and
- ❑ Introduce them to surveys, preference rankings, and other techniques used by planners to assess community needs.

Educators selected from activities that included art, creative writing, mapping, surveys, and group discussions. Then, the educators completed a teacher questionnaire, which helped to explain their activity and offer insight on the best ways to work with the district in the future.

The Arts Council, which manages several arts-related programs with the Alvord and Riverside Unified School Districts, brought a series of “visual journals” to the Community Festival. These journals expressed the creativity of children, who had worked with program artists on themes that included the family, and health of the community. These materials were an interpretation of how children see the health or “wholeness” of the community.

The Alvord School District participated in the youth visioning component of the Riverside Visioning Process. Taking cues from a curriculum guide designed specifically for children in grades 1-12, the students articulated what they felt was important to the future of Riverside's parks and recreation programs, something about which most children have very strong opinions. In all, 307 children participated in these activities.

## **ALVORD EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Overwhelmingly, the children communicated through pictures, and inter-active discussion with their respective teachers, a strong desire to be with their family and friends in parks that have a variety of amenities. The majority of responses stated that they would like: swimming pools, slides, waterslides, monkey bars, baseball/soccer fields, skate parks, and bicycle trails. Many drawings and comments included the desire to have and see animals, such as dogs, ducks, and fish. Those with a more regional view felt that they would like to see a theme park and a place where they could hike and camp.

### **Activity One: Play Memories**

Children were asked to draw a picture of their favorite recreational experience. Then, they taped the drawings to a wall and described the pictures; what made the experience memorable; and what they learned.

#### **Participating schools and results are:**

##### **Foothill Elementary, Grades 1-2**

Number of students: 16

<b>Recreational Experience</b>	<b>Benefits Gained</b>
Playing hide and seek	Fun playing
Doing flips	Felt good
Playing in the park	Fun
Going up stairs	Fun
Playing vampire and monsters	Fun
Playing with my sister	Had fun with sister, brother
Playing with my friends	Fun
Playing on the monkey bars	Fun
Playing on the beach	Had fun
Playing in the rain	Got wet
Playing soccer with dad	Playing with dad
Going to the movies	Had fun
Playing football	Had fun

**La Granada, Grade 1**

Number of students: 12

**Recreational Experience**

Liked the spaceship  
 Played with family  
 The monkey bars were fun  
 I like big slides

Interesting Comment: *Some parks need water fountains because we get hot.*

**Benefits Gained**

Exercise  
 Encouragement  
 Coordination  
 Exercise

**La Granada, Grade 1**

Number of students: 13

**Recreational Experience**

Slide  
 Waterslide  
 Skating  
 Scooter  
 Monkey bars  
 Pool and play equipment  
 Computers at Bryant Park

**Benefits Gained**

Time with family  
 Had fun by himself  
 Time with cousins  
 Time with grandma  
 Self-accomplishment  
 Time with family  
 Felt good about himself – able to help others on the computer, fun with friends

**La Granada, Grade 1**

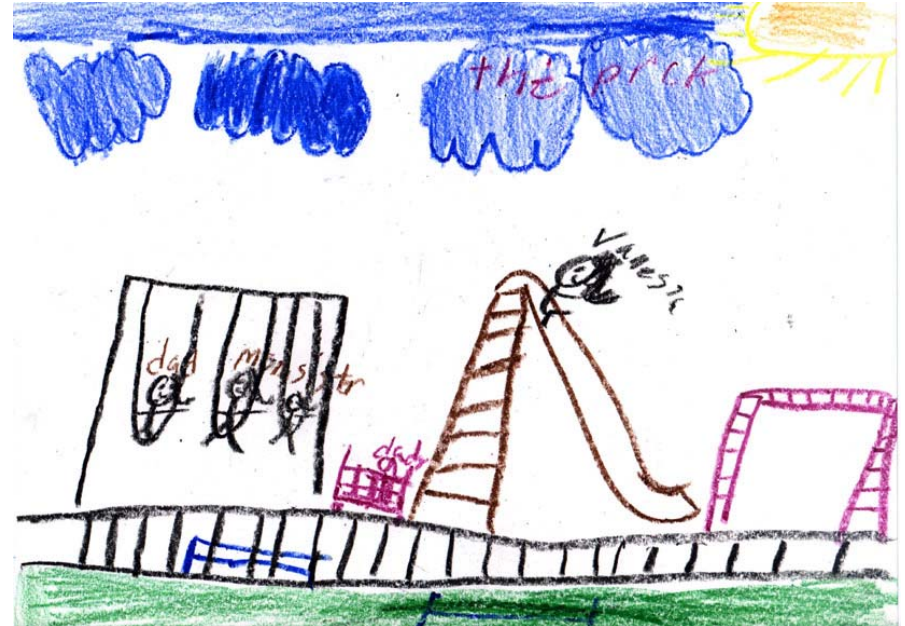
Number of students: 11

**Recreational Experience**

Swimming  
 Soccer  
 Monkey bars

**Benefits Gained**

Time with family  
 Time with friends  
 A sense of joy and enjoyment doing a favorite activity



## RMK, Grade 2

Number of students: 17

### Recreational Experience

Trip to park

Camping

Swimming

Played baseball

Going to beach

### Benefits Gained

Spending time with family and friends

Place to run

Chance to eat outdoors; picnics; playground equipment to play on shady place to sit

Able to watch stars

Sleep in a tent

Learn to dive and hold breath and do flips

Cools you off

Practice pitching and hitting

Chance to swim at night

Looked for shells and sand dollars

Saw dolphins



## Activity Two: A Day in the Park 2020

Children were asked to be time travelers and step out of a transporter beam into the future.

Participating schools and results are:

### Foothill Elementary, Grade 2

Number of students: 16

- ☐ Slides
- ☐ Waterslides
- ☐ Swings
- ☐ Playground
- ☐ Family and friends
- ☐ Fish
- ☐ Good books
- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Pizza Hut (!)
- ☐ Jungle-gym
- ☐ Sand box

- ☐ Apple trees
- ☐ Ponds
- ☐ Flag
- ☐ Firecrackers
- ☐ Camping
- ☐ Hills
- ☐ Water fountain
- ☐ Bicycle trails

**Teacher observations:**

**Parks/Open Spaces:** waterslide, swimming pool, playground, pond, food (snack bar)

**Recreation Activities and Classes:** bicycling, scooters, horses and swimming lessons

**Special Events:** Circus

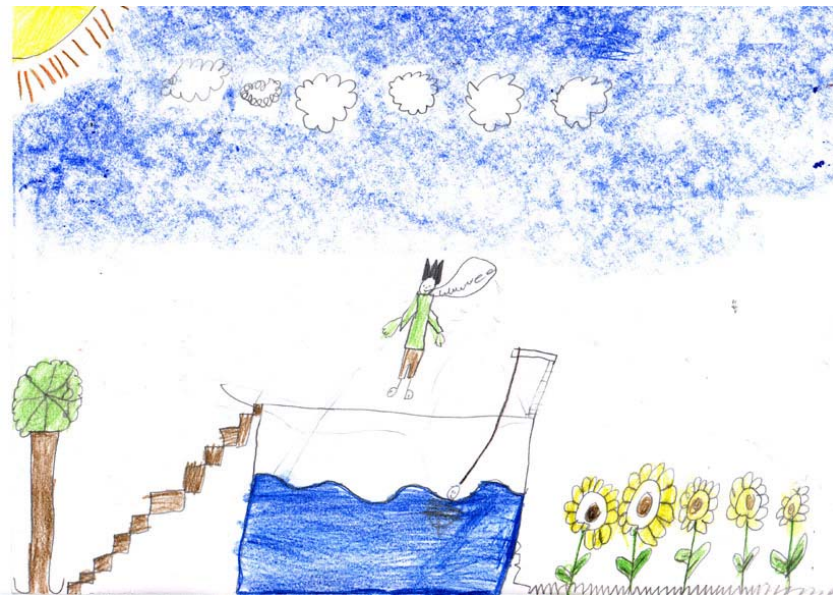
**Transportation and Pathways:** horse trails, bike trails

**Natural Environment:** bird farm, small petting zoo, and aquarium

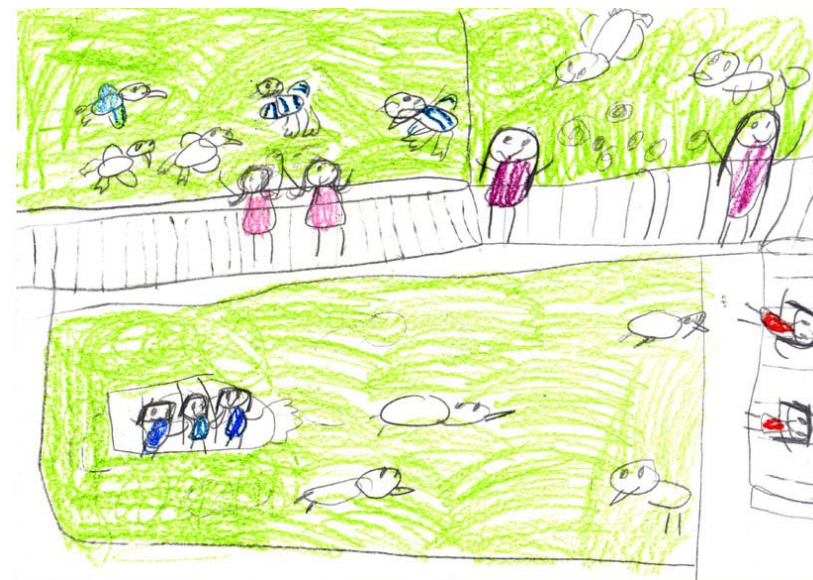
**Foothill Elementary, Grade 4**

Number of students: 23

- ☐ Playground equipment
- ☐ Sprinklers
- ☐ Waterslide
- ☐ Waterfall
- ☐ Pond
- ☐ Ducks
- ☐ Puppies
- ☐ Tree house
- ☐ Giant slide
- ☐ Skate park
- ☐ Turtles
- ☐ Video games
- ☐ Pools
- ☐ Swings
- ☐ Tennis courts
- ☐ Dancing lessons
- ☐ Roller coaster
- ☐ Bumper cars



- ❑ Merry-go-round
- ❑ Baseball
- ❑ Basketball
- ❑ A scary-maze with bricks and trapdoors
- ❑ Play castle
- ❑ Call the playground “Small City”
- ❑ A haunted house
- ❑ Golf course
- ❑ Pine trees
- ❑ Go-carts
- ❑ Food vendors
- ❑ “Disneyland”
- ❑ Toy store
- ❑ Pet shop
- ❑ “Lego Land”
- ❑ Deep lake with fish, plants and flowers



### Activity Three: Free Time Art Activity

Students were asked to draw a picture of local parks and open spaces they like to go to after school or on weekends. After drawing, each student described his or her drawings to the class.

Participating schools and results are:

#### RMK, Grade 3

Number of Students: 7

#### Free Time Destination/Location

Skate park

La Sierra Park

Other parks

#### Activities/Benefits

Good exercise

Not bored

Visit friends

Exercise dogs

Exercise self

Play sports and games

Picnic with family

Hike



Keep you healthy playing outside  
Get to have fun with family and friends  
Feed the ducks so they won't starve

### La Granada, Grade 3

Number of Students: 19

#### Free Time Destination/Location

Parks

Swimming pool

#### Activities/Benefits

Fun exercise: soccer, swinging, bicycling,  
Playing on equipment, picnics, walking dogs  
Fun exercise: swimming lessons, suntan

#### Would like to have:

Petting zoo, butterfly/bird sanctuary,  
Flower garden, obstacle course, dog park,  
Skateboarding park (with ramps)

Good for learning, exercise, and fun

### Activity Four: Park, Open Space and Recreation Activities Chart

Students were asked to review a list of different park and open space activities. Then, they were asked if any additional activities or programs should be included. The children were asked to place three colored dots next to the activities they want the City to provide more of or improve.

#### The top five-ranked activities/programs chosen were:

### La Granada, Grade 4

Number of Students: 31

1. Water park
2. Pool
3. Basketball courts
4. Skate park
5. Theme parks

### School #2

School name and grade level not available

1. Swimming pools



2. Motorcycle tracks
3. Amusement parks
4. Soccer fields
5. Zoo

## Activity Five: Recreation Mapping and Discussion

### La Granada, Grade 5

Number of Students: 31

This was a discussion-oriented exercise for students in which they identified parks, open spaces and pathways that they use now or in the past, and then highlighted on a city map. Teacher asked a series of questions and provided a summary as follows:

“Students were not necessarily concerned with individual parks, ‘just the ones we use.’ They listed their ideas on the back of their maps and used highlighters to mark areas. However, their grasp of the map was limited.

**Sustainability:** Park workers, a volunteer system with schools visiting and helping to clean up the park, “community service.”

**Pathways:** Walkways, sidewalks, especially Tyler by our school.

**Recreation Activities:** Soccer, basketball, swimming, parks where dogs are welcome, ponds for fish, turtles.

**Publicity:** Notices at school, radio two Spanish stations as well as English.

**Transportation:** Most walk to nearby parks, or get rides to parks that are a little further.

**Safety:** This is an issue/concern. At night, (dusk) one student was ‘jumped’ and his necklace was stolen.

**Did your students enjoy this activity?** What recommendations do you have to improve this activity? Enjoyed it “somewhat.” A little more time to complete the project. A large “Class map.”

**Likes:** Soccer fields, BBQ pits, a place to play, swimming pools, basketball.

**Dislikes:** Dirty BBQ, Tyler and Grammercy needs a stop light; smoking and drinking in parks.

**Needed Facilities:** Community centers at all parks; dog parks; turtle ponds; tennis courts; swimming pools at all parks.

**Improvements Needed:** Trash cans, better drinking fountains and air fresheners; bicycle paths; library; museum; better restrooms; skate park; more lights; fences around parks; more flowers; more park employees; more swings; more games.

### Foothill Elementary, Grades 4-5

Number of Students: 31

Class conducted a writing exercise on Lion’s Head hill, near California and Van Buren Streets. It’s currently an open space. Each of the 31 students began a sentence with “*Lion’s Head would be a wonderful park with a...*”

Responses included:

- ❑ Recreation center



- ❑ Swings
- ❑ Monkey bars
- ❑ Baseball field
- ❑ Basketball court
- ❑ Water slide
- ❑ Pool
- ❑ Trampoline
- ❑ Tetherball pole
- ❑ Football field
- ❑ Soccer field
- ❑ Tire swing
- ❑ Bicycle trail
- ❑ Raceway
- ❑ Rock-climbing center outside



Then they started a second sentence with: *“When I got to Bryant Park,”*

I like to play soccer; go to the gym; play baseball; the monkey bars, basketball, the slide, skating, jungle gym, the recreation center.

### Teacher Comments

**Pathways:** Bike and hiking trails.

**Recreation Activities:** Waterslide into a pool or pond (like Yucaipa), shade, sports fields, recreation center, snack bar, playground.

**Transportation:** Bus lines stop near Van Buren and California.

**Safety:** Solar lights to make it safer at night.

**Interesting comment:** *I think you should have the mountains alone because it is a habitat for squirrels and lizards.*

Approximately 80 students submitted drawings, which weren’t attached to an activity guide. The students were in grades, 1, 2, and 3 at RMK and La Granada. However, the drawings captured similar themes, which illustrated the following components:

- ❑ Kids at play on playground equipment
- ❑ Parks with lots of trees, birds, butterflies, flowers, fish
- ❑ Camping under the stars
- ❑ Family members
- ❑ Rainbows
- ❑ Lots of sunshine
- ❑ Water slides
- ❑ Pool

- ☐ Soccer field
- ☐ Bikes
- ☐ Skateboard park
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Dolphins
- ☐ Planes (model?)
- ☐ Castle (playground equipment?)
- ☐ Clean restrooms
- ☐ Play baseball
- ☐ Go to the beach
- ☐ Computers at (Bryant Park)
- ☐ One monster!

**Interesting Comments:**

- ☐ "I'm in the park. I'm playing. I am with my family."
- ☐ "I'm playing on the swings. I'm at the park with my sisters and my dad."
- ☐ "I'm at the park. I am swinging on the monkey bars. I am with my baby sister and my dad."
- ☐ "I love the swing."

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## F. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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### VISIONEER RESPONSES

#### Summary

As part of the City's broad-based Vision effort, residents were invited to participate in the Visioning process on various levels. Key community leaders volunteered as Visioneers to lead discussions with already existing organizations and gather their input for the Visioning process. Over 1,300 residents recorded their responses to the following questions:

- What do you think best about your neighborhood?
- What would you like to improve about your neighborhood?
- When I think about Riverside's future, I am most optimistic about:
- When I think about Riverside's future, I am most worried about:
- What are the two most important issues currently facing the City of Riverside?

The purpose of the comment cards is to provide a direction for the future Vision of Riverside built through consensus and agreement from people who represent the entire community.

The responses were not intended to be used for statistical purposes.

The following is a summary of the data collected and organized thematically by:

- How we work

- How we play
- How we live
- How we get around
- How we learn

#### *WHAT DO YOU THINK BEST ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?*

##### How We Work

- Riversiders like accessibility to local shopping and restaurants.
- The majority of comments reflect a strong desire to keep the charm of local retail and restaurants.
- Other respondents stated what they liked the best about their neighborhood are the businesses in Canyon Crest Town Center.

##### How We Play

- Location – Respondents like that Riverside is centrally located. They like being close to the mountains, beaches, shopping, and amenities.
- Overwhelmingly, what Riversiders like best about their neighborhoods is the physical environment.
  - Green and open space – Riversiders like the trees in their neighborhoods and being close to open space including parks.
  - Aesthetics – Riversiders rate “appearance” as one of the traits that defines Riverside. They particularly like that their

neighborhoods are clean with well maintained yards and attractive surroundings.

- Ambiance – Many Riversiders like the tranquil environment.
- Many Riversiders stated they like the historical character of the neighborhoods, specifically the “beautiful historic homes and wood streets.”

- Riversiders like the family oriented neighborhoods.

#### How We Live

- Overwhelmingly, “A sense of community” is what Riversiders like best about their neighborhoods. Neighbors are cooperative, considerate, look out for each other, and take pride in their neighborhood.
- Riversiders consider home and lot sizes the best about their neighborhoods.
- Many Riversiders consider homes affordable.
- Some Riversiders like the “unique,” traditional, and upscale looking homes, and new developments in their neighborhoods. Specific areas mentioned include: Canyon Crest and Victoria Avenue.
- Overall, many Riversiders feel they live in safe neighborhoods.

#### How We Get Around

- The majority of respondents feel they can easily access most locations from their neighborhoods. They are close to downtown and have easy freeway access.

#### How We Learn

- Riversiders stated that they like being close to the local colleges.

### **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?**

#### How We Work

- Riversiders would like to improve the quality and quantity of local businesses such as shopping centers, restaurants (especially high end restaurants), grocery and retail stores.

#### How We Play

- Respondents would like to see more community parks within their neighborhoods and improvements made to existing parks.
- Other Riversiders felt more entertainment venues are needed in their neighborhoods.

#### How We Live

- The number one thing that Riversiders would like to improve about their neighborhoods is the appearance of certain homes. Specific concerns are:
  - Yard beautification – Landscaping, cars on lawn, etc
  - Maintenance of public areas
  - Graffiti
- The next concern for Riversiders is safety.
- Problems with rental properties were of the next highest concern for Riversiders.

#### How We Get Around

- Riversiders stated that improvements need to be made to:
  - Roads
  - Street signs
  - Lighting

- Light signals
- Riversiders desire access to public transportation.
- Traffic calming devices, such as sound walls, would improve some neighborhoods.

#### How We Learn

- Riversiders feel that after school programs would improve their neighborhoods.
- Childcare within the local neighborhoods is strongly desired.
- Facilities for adult learning will improve neighborhoods.

#### *WHEN I THINK ABOUT RIVERSIDE'S FUTURE, I AM MOST OPTIMISTIC ABOUT:*

##### How We Work

- Riversiders are most optimistic about the opportunity to attract businesses that will create jobs.

##### How We Play

- Riversiders are most optimistic about the opportunity to expand entertainment activities and venues in the downtown area.
- Respondents are optimistic about the future of the City's parks and recreation activities and facilities.
- Riversiders are also optimistic about the local amenities.
- Riversiders expressed optimism about arts and culture.

##### How We Live

- Respondents are optimistic about citizens' involvement in their community.

- Many Riversiders strongly believe that there is potential to improve the aesthetic qualities of their neighborhoods.
- Riversiders believe that there is an opportunity for City government to plan for positive change in Riverside.

#### How We Get Around

- Overwhelmingly, Riversiders feel optimistic about opportunities to improve the traffic conditions.
- Respondents see opportunities to improve the current public transportation system.
- Riversiders see opportunities to improve Roadway conditions.

#### How We Learn

- Riversiders firmly believe that there are many opportunities to improve education in Riverside, especially K-12.
- Respondents are optimistic about improving school facilities.
- There is potential to improve after school activities for Riverside's youth.

#### *WHEN I THINK ABOUT RIVERSIDE'S FUTURE, I AM MOST WORRIED ABOUT:*

##### How We Work

- A major concern is economic development in general (revitalization, redevelopment).
- Riversiders are most concerned with the City's ability to attract and retain worthwhile business.
- Another concern is the lack of "good" quality paying jobs for all Riverside residents.

#### How We Play

- Riversiders are most concerned with losing green space.
- Many Riversiders are concerned with the lack of after school activities for youth.
- The current condition of local parks is a concern for many Riversiders. Respondents also believe that, currently there are not enough parks within the community.

#### How We Live

- The major concern for Riversiders is crime and safety. Gang and drugs are specific issues associated with crime. Some Riversiders noted concerns with police personnel.
- The next concern is growth and planning for growth. Some respondents are concerned with City infrastructure to accommodate future growth.
- Air quality is a concern.

#### How We Get Around

- Issues associated with traffic are the number one concern for Riversiders.
- Access to public transportation.
- Improvement to roadways is what worries some Riversiders.

#### How We Learn

- Riversiders are mostly worried about education.
- The current condition of local schools is a concern for Riversiders.
- Many Riversiders worry about opportunities for youth.

#### *WHAT ARE THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES CURRENTLY FACING THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE?*

##### How We Work

- The most important issue is the City's ability to attract new business.
- Riversiders believe that one of the most important issues facing their City is economic development and redevelopment.
- Creation of high quality jobs is very important to Riversiders.

##### How We Play

- An important issue for Riversiders is the lack of recreation and entertainment venues.
- Consideration of open space is an issue for some Riversiders. Maintenance and creation of park space is also an issue.
- After school activities is an important issue.

##### How We Live

- Safety is the greatest concern for Riversiders.
- Another important issue is neighborhood aesthetics.
- Air quality is a major concern.

##### How We Get Around

- Traffic is the greatest problem.
- Riversiders are concerned with road/roadway related issues.
- Public transportation is a concern.

#### How We Learn

- Riversiders are anxious about education related issues, especially in the K-12 grades.
- The current state of schools is also a concern.

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## G. RIVERSIDE'S VISION FESTIVAL

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On Saturday, July 27, 2002 over 450 residents and community leaders attended the Community Visioning and Resource Festival held at Riverside Community College. The day's activities included three facilitated town hall sessions designed to create an open forum for residents to voice their concerns about Riverside's future. Discussion focused on three topics that the Vision Planning Committee developed earlier in the Visioning process.

The topics were:

- ❑ Who is Riverside? Celebrating through diversity, arts and culture
- ❑ Great neighborhoods strengthen cities. Why does it matter?
- ❑ Do schools really matter? Education, jobs and quality of life

The wall graphics are a summary of the communities input and highlights points made during the town hall sessions.

Community organizations that participated in the Community Visioning and Resource Fair

Alternatives to Domestic Violence

Alvord Unified School District

American Cancer Society

American Heart Association

American Red Cross: Riverside County Chapter

Black History Month Committee

Cal Works/GAIN Program

California Baptist University

CalTrans

City of Riverside Building and Safety Division

City of Riverside City Clerk's Office

City of Riverside Community Police Review Commission

City of Riverside Development Department

City of Riverside Fire Department

City of Riverside Historic Preservation Program

City of Riverside Human Relations Commission & Staff



City of Riverside Human Resources Department  
 City of Riverside Information Systems Department  
 City of Riverside Mayor's Office  
 City of Riverside Office of Neighborhoods  
 City of Riverside Park and Recreation Department - Recreation  
 City of Riverside Park and Recreation Department -  
     Administration  
 City of Riverside Planning Department  
 City of Riverside Police Department  
 City of Riverside Public Works Department – Code  
     Compliance  
 City of Riverside Public Works Department – Solid Waste  
 City of Riverside Public Works Department – Industrial Waste  
 City of Riverside Public Works Department – Traffic  
     Engineering  
 Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program  
 Dickens Festival  
 Fair Housing Council of Riverside County  
 Global Trade Center of Inland Empire  
 Habitat for Humanity  
 International Relations Council  
 Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful/Riverside Against Taggers

March Joint Powers Authority  
 Mission Inn Foundation and Museum  
 Orange Blossom Festival  
 Riverside Community College - Economic Development  
     Programs  
 Riverside 20 30  
 Riverside Arts Council  
 Riverside Community College  
 Riverside Downtown Partnership  
 Riverside Exchange Club  
 Riverside Latino Voter Project  
 Riverside Municipal Airport  
 Riverside Public Library  
 Riverside Public Utilities  
 Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District  
 United Way of the Inland Valleys  
 University Eastside Community Collaborative  
 University Eastside Community Collaborative (UECC)/  
     AmeriCorps  
 University Neighborhood Working Group  
 Youth Action Office  
 Youth Service Center





(PLACE HOLDER FOR VISION FESTIVAL WALLGRAPHIC)

(PLACEHOLDER)

(PLACEHOLDER)